



Wreath-laying ceremony honors fallen veterans

BY CHRISTINA BRANDMEIER
REPORTER

HARSHAW – There’s no shortage of holiday events in the Northwoods, but one held on Saturday, Dec. 14, was perhaps among the most meaningful.

As part of National Wreaths Across America Day, community members gathered at Northwoods National Cemetery in Harshaw to place Christmas wreaths on the graves of veterans. Organizers said the event remembers the fallen, honors those who serve and teaches the next generation the value of freedom.

“[It’s about] paying tribute to the sacrifice and service of our veterans [and] coming together to express our gratitude and respect,” said Mary Ingman, who, along with Bob Smith, coordinated the local event.

Ingman said this is the fifth year of holding Wreaths Across America ceremonies at Northwoods National Cemetery, and this year, they were one of 4,909 participating locations in the United States.

The ceremony, led by Commander Casey Crump, Ret. — U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, began at 11 a.m.

It included a presentation of colors by the event sponsors, the American Legion Riders Association and the Wisconsin District 11 Veterans Ceremony-U.G.C., Inc.; an invocation by Reverend Charles Sheffler; the Pledge of Allegiance by the American Legion baseball team,



On the snow-covered ground, rows of graves with Christmas wreaths honor fallen veterans on Wreaths Across America Day held at Northwoods National Cemetery in Harshaw. **Dave Melancon photos**

the Rhinelander Post 7 Rebels; and the national anthem by Jake Kriesel.

Wreath laying began at 11:30 a.m., with wreaths sponsored by community members and businesses. Wreaths Across America describes sponsoring a veteran’s wreath as “a personal gift of gratitude and remem-

brance for someone who served this country so that we can be free.”

When placing the wreaths, participants were encouraged to say the veteran’s name “to ensure that the legacy of duty, service, and sacrifice is never forgotten.”

See **VETERANS** page 3



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MMC Announces Holiday Break for Printed Editions

MMC will not publish a printed edition of this paper between December 26 through January 1. This will allow our employees to enjoy quality time with their families during the holiday season. This publication will resume publishing on its regular day after the new year begins. Thank you for your understanding, and we wish you a joyous holiday season!

Patrick Wood
Publisher

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RCF surpasses \$1 million in grants

FOR STAR JOURNAL

In 2024, the Rhinelander Community Foundation (RCF) surpassed \$1 million in grants awarded to the community.

"This remarkable milestone reflects the power of generosity and a shared commitment to creating a brighter future for Rhinelander," said Shane Sparks, RCF board member.

"Thanks to the unwavering support of donors and visionary leadership, RCF reached this \$1,000,000 milestone by awarding meaningful grants through established funds," he added.

According to Sparks, this year alone, the RCF granted over \$92,000 to 21 local charitable organizations dedicated to enhancing the lives of Rhinelander residents.

Additionally, seven new funds were established, including the Ron and Elsie

Gaber Grants for the Greater Good endowment fund.

"RCF provides an enduring way for donors to make a difference," said Sparks. "Whether contributing to an existing fund or creating a new one, donors can achieve their charitable goals — supporting causes close to their hearts, empowering organizations, or leaving a lasting family legacy."

"Endowed funds are built to last forever, growing through investment and creating annual grants that reflect the values and vision of the donors who established them."

RCF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit accredited by the Community Foundations National Standards.

For more information, visit rhinelandercommunityfoundation.com.



Toy drive tournament

The eighth annual Sammy Ramker Jr. charity pool tournament event took place Dec. 7 at Sammy's Jr's in Rhinelander. The event raised over \$8,600 for local charities and organizations, and toys were donated to the Kindness for Kids toy drive. "Our event was so successful thanks to all the amazing pool players, community members, sponsors, and donors," said Sara Jewell. "Our community is one of the best when it comes to making holiday seasons more magical for those in need." **Submitted photo**

Birth to 3 Program to host Jan. 8 event

FOR STAR JOURNAL

The Birth to 3 Program will host a Child Find event Wednesday, Jan. 8, from 9 to 11 a.m., at the Oneida County Human Services's Timber Drive location in Rhinelander.

It's open to children ages zero to three who may benefit from early intervention services.

At the event, children will receive free screenings to assess developmental milestones and determine eligibility for the Birth to 3 Program.

According to Oneida County Human Services, the Birth to 3 Program provides essential services to children and families, focusing on early intervention

for developmental delays.

Through the program, children receive individualized support to enhance cognitive, motor, communication, and social-emotional development.

The team works closely with families to create tailored plans, ensuring each child's unique needs are met.

Services may include developmental screenings and assessments, speech, physical, and occupational therapy, family-centered support and resources, and assistance navigating community services.

For more information or to register, call 715-369-2215 or email kn@thehuman-servicecenter.org.

'Cluck off' to support Three Lakes-Brule River Trails

FOR STAR JOURNAL

The Chicken Soup Cluck Off and Meat Raffle, a fundraiser to support the Three Lakes-Brule River Trails, will be held Saturday, Jan. 25, from 2 to 5 p.m., at Lindy's Hideaway and Swamp Witch Inn in Three Lakes.

For \$8, attendees can try any or all of the homemade chicken soups from local businesses and place a vote for the

best chef.

There will also be many meat raffles throughout the event.

All proceeds support Three Lakes-Brule River Trails for grooming and trail maintenance.

Lindy's is located at 290 Wesley Road.

Follow the Three Lakes Trails Facebook page for up-to-date event details.

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VETERANS *from page 1*

Sheffler also spoke on this year's theme, "live with purpose," the Northwoods Honor Guard fired a three-round volley, and Ginny Buzzell performed "Taps."

The event concluded with a complimentary luncheon and dessert social at Rondele Ranch.

"As we have continued to grow every year, we could not put on this event without the support of our volunteers, wreath sponsors, and the numerous media outlets," said Ingman. "As well as the businesses, organizations, and individuals who sponsor the event and luncheon following the ceremony."

According to Ingman, the National Wreaths Across America in Maine reported that participants placed three million wreaths in 2024.

Next year's National Wreaths Across America Day will be Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025.

There is a wreath match until Jan. 17. For each sponsored wreath, Northwoods National Cemetery will receive a free wreath. Matches will only be honored through online orders or by mail.

To sponsor a wreath, visit wreath-sacrossamerica.org/WINWNC. For more information, call 715-612-2196.



An honor guard member prepares to place a Christmas wreath on a veteran's grave. **Dave Melancon photos**



At the ceremony, Reverend Charles Sheffler spoke on the 2024 theme, "living with purpose."

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Northwoods Project Search to hold information night

FOR STAR JOURNAL

The Northwoods Project Search program will hold an open house Wednesday, Jan. 8, at 5:30 p.m. at Aspirus Hospital in Rhinelander.

According to instructor Rod Olson, Project Search is a business-led program that allows young adults with developmental disabilities an opportunity to perform internships to learn and develop job skills and explore career paths.

The program includes instruction, skills training, and ongoing job development.

“The hallmark of Project Search is total workplace immersion, which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training leading to the acquisition of marketable work skills,” Olson said.

He added that many interns are enrolled while completing their final year of high school and are transitioning from high school to work, and others are young adults who have completed high school.

The open house will provide information on the program’s goals, how to become an intern, and how to enroll.

Potential interns and their families, teachers, caseworkers, care managers, counselors, and learning support directors are welcome to attend.

Aspirus Rhinelander Hospital is located at 2251 N. Shore Drive. The event will be in the lower conference rooms, numbers one and two. Light refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact Olson at 715-482-8957 or olsonrod@rhinelander.k12.wi.us.

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OBITUARIES



Dolores Norma Voss, 98, peacefully passed away at her beloved Grace Lodge home in the company of loved ones after a decline related to heart disease. Dolores’ strong Christian faith blessed her with the promise that the final journey through heaven’s gates would be a glorious day. Her directive to family and friends asked that they be happy when she died, not sad.

Dolores’ death was preceded by her parents Albert and Alice Roehr; brothers, Richard Roehr and James Roehr; husband Eugene Voss, son Frederick Voss, and grandson Eric Voss. Survivors include her son Richard and Vickie (Goehe) Voss; daughter, Jean Voss and Steve Doll (husband); grandchildren Greta (Voss) Knowles and husband John Knowles; Heidi Voss, and her great grandchildren Eugene Voss, Olivia, Alexander, and Eliza Knowles, wonderful nieces and nephews, and friends.

Dolores moved from Milwaukee to Rhinelander in 1962. Aside from raising her children, Dolores enjoyed reading, gardening, sewing, ice skating, swimming, traveling, opera, going for walks, bird watching, and listening to public radio broadcasts.

In 1966, Dolores began working for the State of Wisconsin as a social worker. She always held a genuine concern for foster children in her care. Dolores later transitioned to overseeing adoptions until retiring in 1985.

Dolores remained regularly active in church functions at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. Sunday school teaching, singing in the choir, serving on committees, cooking for special events, putting together care packages and quilts for third world countries, and serving as a key link in the church’s prayer chain were important to her. She also volunteered at Rhinelander’s first recycling center.

Dolores will be remembered for being a kind and caring soul.

Thank you to Mary and Don Ross for being great neighbors during Dolores’ final years in her home, the amazing staff at Grace Lodge, Hospice, health care team, The Rhinelander Public Library, Dolores’ special friend Gina Scheuer, Hildebrand-Russ Funeral Home, and everyone else who touched her life.

Visitation will begin at 10:30am at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rhinelander on Friday, January 3rd, 2025, followed by a service of remembrance presided by Pastor Kari Vadis at 11:00am. Lunch will be provided directly afterwards.

Instead of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to the Rhinelander Public Library’s “Books on the Go” program for area seniors and homebound patrons so they may continue to enjoy the same services that Dolores so cherished as a passionate reader. <https://rhinelanderlibrary.org/outreach/>



Lynn E. Brown, age 79, of Tomahawk, WI, passed away on Monday, December 16, 2024, at the Legacy of the Northwoods Assisted Living in Eagle River, WI. Lynn was born in Wausau, WI, on November 3, 1945, to the late Walter and Doris (Krueger) Kropla. She was married to Richard Brown on February 2, 1963; he survives.

Lynn was a 1964 graduate of the Tomahawk High School. She worked at Sacred Heart Hospital for some time while

she was in school and later worked at Johnson Level & Tool where she was employed for over 30 years. Lynn was a faithful and active member of Grace Lutheran Church. She enjoyed camping. Her and Richard would camp on their way to and from Alaska. In her younger years, Lynn coached girls softball. She had a love for horses, sharing a horse named “Happy” with her son, Tod. Lynn was a friend to everyone she met and will be missed by all.

Survivors include her husband of over 61 years, Richard Brown; her grandchildren, Katie “Katie Bug” Felch, Olivia “Livvy” Brown, MaKayla Becker, and Alden Brown; her great-grandchildren, Paisley, Kaelynn, Baylee, and Camden; her brother, Tom Kropla; her sister, Janet Lowe; and her best friend, her dog, Sadie. She is further survived by many nieces, nephews, and extended family members. She was preceded in death by her parents, Walter and Doris; her son, Tod Brown; her brother, Fred Kropla; and dear family members and friends.

Memorial services for Lynn Brown were held on Monday, December 23, 2024, at 11:00 AM, at Grace Lutheran Church. Rev. Julie Sinkula will officiate. The family received friends for visitation from 9:00 AM until the time of services at 11:00 AM. Inurnment took place at the Prairie Rapids Cemetery. Generations Funeral Home & Crematory is assisting the family. You may view Lynn’s obituary and



Alex Henry Kafka
July 26, 1925 ~ December 15, 2024

Age ~ 99
Alex was born July 26, 1925, in Wausaukee, Wisconsin to Stanislaw “Stanley” and Stanislaw “Stella” Kawka, the youngest of thirteen children. He is preceded in death by his wife, Florence, by his parents, and all siblings, sisters, Irina, Isabelle, and Martha, and brothers, Boleslaw, Matthew, Sigmund, Leo, Stanley, Stephen, Edward, Tedow, and Philip.

He is survived by two sons, Michael Kafka (Karina Alderton), and Mark Kafka, along with numerous nieces, and nephews.

Alex grew up on a dairy farm in Wausaukee where he attended Catholic School. He excelled in math and enjoyed playing the violin. In his early teens, with all his siblings serving in WWII, he ran the farm with his father.

Alex proudly served in the United States Army in WWII, where he served in The Military Government Team in Akita, Japan. After returning home, he moved to Chicago, where his parents and some siblings now lived. He worked two jobs and saved his money to “Get out of the city”. In July 1952, he married Florence Naglowski and they had fifty years together.

In May of 1959, Alex and Florence purchased land on Lake George where they raised two boys. A month later he started building the first of what would be ten cottages along with a home and bar. He rented the first cottage on June 2, 1960, and that very same cottage is still being rented sixty-four years later at the time of his death. Kafka’s Rainbow Resort had cottages with all the colors of the rainbow. Soon the name would be changed to Kafka’s Resort.

Alex had many friends from all walks of life that came to the Resort. There was always lots of fun along with many horseshoe tournaments. His favorite horseshoe partner was T. Texas Tyler, a Country Music Hall of Fame Inductee who spent many summers at the Resort. Many came to the Resort the same week every year and it was always a big reunion. Many have been coming back for decades. They included Mr. and Mrs. Ariens, the snow/lawn equipment founders who have been staying at the resort for over twenty years, Major League Pitcher, Harvey Kitzman, Pro Golfer, Dan Forsman, and a Kentucky Derby winning Jockey. These are just a few of the countless great families that stayed at his Resort.

Alex always said he built the place for kids. He built a beautiful beach and a large playground. Every Saturday, there was a trail of kids clothing down to the beach. The kids wore their swimsuits under their clothes on the way up to the Resort. The kids were always excited to meet up with and play with their friends they had not seen for a year. Every Saturday there were kids with tears not wanting to leave. One of the best things was to see the dozens of next generations coming back. The longest family had vacationed at the Resort for fifty-five years and was into their fifth generation.

Then there was the bar and recreation room overlooking the Resort. It was a “Jumping Place” with piano, guitar, accordion, violin, and of course a stump fiddle players. Most nights it was hard for Alex to get the people back to their cottages by 3am with him having to work in the morning.

Alex was a founding member of the Town of Pelican Fire Department. He purchased an Evinrude outboard, donating it to the department for them to raffle off. That money was used to purchase the first Pumper for the department. He was instrumental organizing the Snowbound Country Snowmobile Club. With his Jeep pickup and old chainsaw, Alex and a handful of men cut every trail for the east side Rhinelander club. The first groomer would be delivered to his driveway. At the time, Alex and that handful of guys funded the entire club, reaching into their own pockets to purchase the equipment, signs, gas along with any other items. As club President he spent many seasons grooming trails. He was a long-time member of the Rhinelander Lions Club. For over a decade he collected the most donations for the White Cane Day fundraiser. He was a member of St. Mary’s/Nativity Parrish since 1959. In 1961, he worked tirelessly helping raise funds to build the current church. He bought, cleaned, and donated all the smelt for the first St. Mary’s famous smelt fry. His wife Florence would make all the potato salad. Alex was President of Better Resorts and then the Rhinelander Chamber. He was a prominent factor in developing Rhinelander Tourism.

Alex loved music since he was a youngster. Kafka’s Resort Bar always had music going, either live or from the jukebox. Even in his last days he was singing to the staff at Rennes. He taught his boys to work hard and to hunt and fish. He enjoyed fishing for bluegills the most. Even in his mid-90’s Alex would bluegill fish every spring. He was also an avid gardener, but what he enjoyed the most was to work. At age ninety-seven, Alex still made all his own appointments, cut all the lawn, raked, drove the tractor and used a chainsaw. On his ninety-eighth birthday he was still cutting all the lawn at his Resort.

Alex was a generous man, always willing to lend a hand. He had a wonderful life, saw many things and changes take place. As a youngster he took his mother by horse and buggy to the General Store to trade eggs for credit to buy necessities. Now it’s a few clicks on the phone and the eggs are at your doorstep. Many wonderful friends came through Kafka’s Resort including maybe his best friend, T. Texas Tyler. He called him “Hi Neighbor” because that is how he greeted everyone. Tyler wrote songs and played at Alex’s bar for many summers.

Alex always said, “Everything in moderation ...EXCEPT work”.

The visitation for Alex was held on Wednesday, evening, December 18, 2024, at the Hildebrand Funeral Home from 5:00 pm until 7:00 pm. The second visitation took place on Thursday, December 19, 2024, at Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church, from 10:00 am until the 11:30 am Mass of Christian Burial. Fr. Chris Kemp officiated.

Immediately following the mass, there was a procession to Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Cemetery where the Committal Service and military honors took place.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the Hildebrand Funeral Home & Cremation Specialists, 24 E. Davenport Street, Rhinelander, Wisconsin, 54501, 715-365-4343. Everyone is invited to leave an online condolence at www.hildebrandrussfh.com

DEATH NOTICES

Jeb D. Ostrom, 37 of Rhinelander, died Dec. 15, 2024. Carlson Funeral Home.

David R. Schroeder Sr., 77 of Rhinelander, died Dec. 12, 2024. Carlson Funeral Home.

David E. Somers, 82 of Rhinelander, died Dec. 12, 2024. Carlson Funeral Home.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As one story concludes, another begins

READERS,

It's been said that retirement is like a long weekend, except you never have to go back to work. I've decided to test that theory. After 10 years reporting on the news and events in the Rhinelander area, I am retiring as editor of the Star Journal.

If you are reading this, thank you for your interest in local news. You have given me and the rest of the team at the Star Journal purpose in what we work so hard to produce. Meeting community members and helping them tell their stories over the years has been a joy; being trusted to share them, an immense honor.

A few other quick thank yous before I go. First and foremost, I want to thank my family for their patience and understanding about the long hours, vacations that didn't take place, and the distraction of incoming email.

Thanks to my co-workers – everyone I had the pleasure of working with over my 19 years with the paper; you have made coming to work less of a job. And a way back thanks to Mike Michalak for hiring a know-it-all 23-year-old from Minnesota to join his news team at the newly-named WJFW. Rhinelander felt like home from the time I arrived.

Christina Brandmeier will take over as Star Journal editor. She has a wealth of experience in media, most recently working for the Vilas County News Review as the Lifestyle editor. Christina has spent summer and winter holidays in the Northwoods since she was a kid and is happy to live here full time.

Wishing everyone the best in the new year!

And, please, keep supporting local news.
Eileen Persike



Tea, biscuits and carols

Jan Baer and her daughter Marilyn Pekol play holiday carols during the annual Christmas Tea hosted by Friends of the Rhinelander District Library. The tea was held Tuesday, Dec. 17. Visitors enjoyed sweet treats, tea, coffee and music. For more information on the Friends of the Rhinelander District Library, visit the group's Facebook page. **Star Journal photo**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

Letters to the Editor must include the writer's full name, address, and other contact information (only your name and town will appear in print and online).

We will not accept a letter from an unidentified source.

- Letters should be no more than 500 words and may appear in our weekly print issue.

- Letters may be edited by our staff for length, clarity and facts.

- The Star Journal will only print letters that address a specific issue or article that may be of interest to the bulk of our readers.

- Submit Letters to the Editor Here: starjournal@mmllocal.com, 800-36-3331 or 24 W. Rives, Rhinelander, WI 54501

We will not print letters that:

- Contain potentially libelous material. Libel is any malicious, unsubstantiated or untrue statement about someone that damages their reputation. Submissions must have facts to back up all claims.

- Support discrimination on any grounds. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or culture.

- Are vulgar, profane, obscene or otherwise offensive.

- Make explicit or implied threats. This includes personal attacks, intimidation, bullying or threat of harm against a person or organization.

- Contain copyrighted material or that have been printed in another publication. All Letters must be an original writing by the signer and exclusive to the Star Journal.

- Identifies another person, unless that person has given their explicit consent. We assume that any person identified in a letter has consented to be mentioned in the letter.

- Copyright and reprint permission

- The writer of a Letter to the Editor maintains copyright of their letter. Any other individual or organization must seek permission from the writer if they wish to reprint a letter to the editor

- Political Letters to the Editor

- All letters submitted as an endorsement for a political candidate, referendum or political agenda will carry the same guidelines as above. However, they will be charged \$40 for the first 250 words and an additional \$10 per additional 50 words. All political letters must be pre-paid prior to printing. Some submissions may be referred to our advertising department to be run as ads.

Rev: 02/05/24

| PUBLISHER LETTER |

A New Year With New Beginnings

Dear Reader,

As the calendar turns to another New Year, we find ourselves at a familiar crossroads, a time for renewal and reflection. It's a time when we take stock of our lives, weighing the good against the bad, and consider the impact we've had on the world around us. The New Year offers a chance to set new goals and make resolutions in the hopes of becoming the best versions of ourselves.



a way of diverting our focus, and those grand plans can slip away unnoticed.

But perhaps that's okay. The beauty of the New Year lies not just in our ambitions but in the grace we grant ourselves when we fall short. It's a time to acknowledge our humanity, to understand that growth is not always linear, and that the journey itself—full of missteps and lessons—is what truly matters.

So as we step into this New Year, let's embrace the opportunity to dream, to set intentions, and to strive for better. But let's also be kind to ourselves when we stumble, and remember that each new day brings with it the possibility of renewal.

Wishing you a joyous New Year, full of hope, reflection, and the endless potential of new beginnings.

PATRICK J. WOOD
Publisher

Author of "Reflections" a new book now available on Amazon.

Winter clothing drive set until Dec. 30

FOR STAR JOURNAL

The Rhinelander Area Chamber of Commerce invites the community to participate in the Big Bundle Up campaign, which collects new or gently used coats, sweaters, hats, mittens, and other warm clothing items to support those in need.

The winter clothing can be dropped off at the Rhinelander Chamber at 450 W. Kemp St.

The Hodag10s are also involved in the Big Bundle Up and have a drop-off

site at Northland Insurance Agency, 131 Randall Ave. in Rhinelander.

Donations will be accepted until Dec. 30 and go to the Warm for Winter clothing pantry.

Warm for Winter distribution days are held at the First Congregational UCC Church at 135 E. Larch St. on the last Saturday of each month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and the second Monday from 4 to 6 p.m. through March 2025.

For more information, contact the Rhinelander chamber at 715-365-7464.



A holiday salute

Northwoods Honor Guard members salute as Jalane Adams places a Christmas wreath on her son's grave, U.S. Army Sgt. Ryan Adams, during a private ceremony Dec. 15 at the Northland Memorial Park in Rhinelander. **Dave Melancon photo**



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Rhineland school board okays operational referendum question

FOR THE STAR JOURNAL

RHINELANDER – At its Dec. 16 meeting, the School District of Rhineland Board of Education approved an operational referendum question that will appear on the ballot Tuesday, April 1, 2025.

If the referendum is approved, the district will be able to exceed its revenue limit by an additional \$3 million per year in both the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years. Once the current referendum, which was approved in 2022, expires in 2027, the district would then be able to exceed its revenue limit by \$7 million in the 2027-28 and 2028-29 school years.

In total, the district would be exceeding its revenue limit by \$7 million in each of the next four years.

“We are proud of our efforts to continue providing our students with an exceptional educational experience, despite the financial challenges facing our district and many others like ours across the state,” said Superintendent Eric Burke. “As we continue to manage the impact of rising costs and an inadequate state funding system, we are once again looking to engage our community and propose a solution that will position our students for success, now and in the coming years.”

Burke added that while the financial support provided through the 2022 operational referendum has been “incredibly important” for the district’s schools and students, costs have continued to increase at a rapid

pace over the past two-and-a-half years.

Since 2022, expenses across the board have risen 16.11%, while revenue has increased by about 3.38%. The most notable cost increases have been in the areas of salaries and benefits (16%), special education (17%), summer school (41%), and transportation (20%).

To that end, the board is proposing a new operational referendum that would remain in place for the next four years. The first two years of the new referendum would overlap with the final two years of the current referendum.

If the new referendum is approved, the projected tax rate for the 2025-26 school year would be \$7.92 per \$1,000 of home fair market value. This would represent an increase of 52 cents in the first year. For the owner of a home with an equalized value of \$200,000, it would amount to an increase of \$104.

The tax rate is then projected to decrease in each year of the four-year operational referendum. The projected tax rate for the 2028-29 school year would be \$7.07 per \$1,000 of home fair market value. This would mark a decrease of 36 cents from the current 2024-25 tax rate.

For more information about the district’s financial needs and the proposed solution on the ballot in April 2025, visit rhineland.k12.wi.us/district/referendum.cfm.

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Jeans for Teens supports homeless shelter

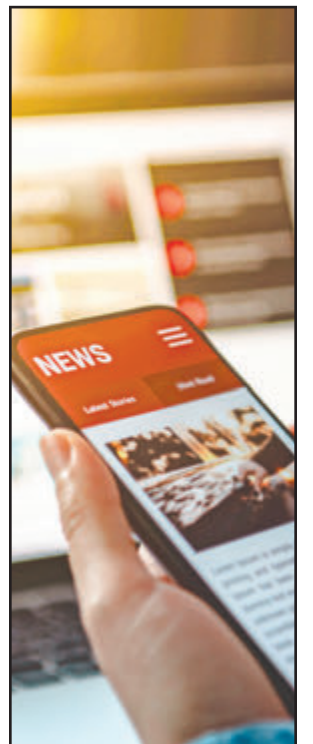
FOR STAR JOURNAL

Rhineland High School FBLA/DECA is holding its annual Jeans for Teens drive until Jan. 7. The group is collecting gently used jeans for community members in need.

To donate, the collection sites to drop off jeans are Rhineland High School, James Williams Middle School, Crescent Elementary School, Pelican Elementary School, Central Elementary School, Maurices, Rhineland District Library, Campfire Coffee and Creamery (A'La Mode), Bath and Body Creations, and the YMCA, in the box wrapped in Christmas paper.

Donations will go to the Frederick Place homeless shelter.

For more information, call 715-365-9500.



Find us online at StarjournalNOW.com



Holiday Happenings

A roundup of this week's holiday-themed events across the Northwoods

Dec. 25, Rhinelander Lions Community Christmas Dinner: 11:30 a.m.- 1 p.m., Trig's, 232 S. Courtney St. Free Christmas dinner open to the community. Available for pick up at Trig's Deli Express Entrance.

Dec. 25-Jan. 1, Lights of the Northwoods: 5- 9 p.m., Hodag Park, 509 Rose St., Rhinelander. Nightly light displays, holiday music, bonfires, special weekend activities, including a visit

from Rhinelander's Santa and a fireworks show on New Year's Day. Free admission. Collections of food and monetary donations will support area food pantries. Lightsofthenorthwoods.org.

Dec. 26-29, A Christmas Wonderland: Over one million lights on display at Rondele Ranch, 8959 Hwy K, Harshaw. Walking tours are Fridays and Saturdays from 5-9 p.m., plus Thursday, Dec. 26, 5-9

p.m. Driving tours Sundays and Tuesdays, 5- 8 p.m. \$20 per car; cash only at the gate. Proceeds support local non-profit groups. 1-844-WI-RANCH.

Dec. 26-28 and Dec. 30-31, Christmas Train Village Show: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Hosted by the Northwoods Model Railroad Club. The 2024 display will be set up in the Train Station Shops in Minocqua, in the former Clothes Connection Unit, 611 Oneida St. All ages.

Free. Visit facebook.com/northwoodsmodelrailroadclub.

Dec. 31, New Year's Eve Fireworks: 3- 7 p.m., Woodruff Town Hall. Sledding, ice skating, horse-drawn wagon rides, and a bonfire. Fireworks at 7 p.m. The Cross Country Cruisers will be hosting food, beverages, and children's activities indoors. 715-356-9421.

Dec. 31, New Year's Eve Candlelight Hike/Snow-

shoe: 5:30-8 p.m., Trees for Tomorrow, Eagle River. \$5 per person; children five and under are free. Pre-registration encouraged at treesfortomorrow.com. 715-479-6456.

Dec. 31, New Year's Eve Pre-Party with Music Bingo: 2-9 p.m., The Brew Station, 1803 Superior St., Three Lakes. Annual New Year's Eve Pre-Party featuring appetizers and a chance to win a 200mL bottle of bubbly. Music

Bingo at 7 p.m., where instead of numbers, you'll mark off your favorite songs. 715-222-5474.

Jan. 1, Rhinelander Woman's Club concessions: 5-7 p.m., Hodag Park Pavilion, Rhinelander. The woman's club will be selling hot drinks, water, nachos, and sweet snacks before the Lights of the Northwoods fireworks display. See the Rhinelander Woman's Club Facebook page.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Note: Due to the holidays, events, dates, and times are subject to change.

Dec. 26, Builder's Club: 1-5 p.m., Rhinelander District Library, 106 N. Stevens St. Legos, Magna-Tiles, and more available in the children's department. Free. 715-365-1073.

Dec. 26-28, ArtStart Winter Gallery Exhibitions: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 26, and Friday, Dec. 27; 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 28. Featuring "Passing Through Wonderland" from artist Andrea Kidd and "Past, Present, and Future" from Cassandra

Smith. 715-362-4328 or artstartrhinelander.org.

Dec. 28, Warm For Winter: 9:30-11:30 a.m., First Congregational UCC, 135 E. Larch St., Rhinelander. New and gently used warm clothing, shoes, boots, coats, hats, mittens, toys, and bedding. No income requirements. Place donations in the bin outside the church or the tub in the Oneida County Health-ADRC building. 608-345-7305 or Warm For Winter Facebook page.

Dec. 28, Personal Essentials Pantry (PEP): 9-11:30 a.m., First United Method-

ist Church, 724 Arbutus St., Rhinelander. Use entrance A on the corner of Prospect and Wabash. PEP provides products necessary for personal and household cleanliness and good health. 715-362-2091.

Dec. 28, Rhinelander Area Food Pantry: 9-11:30 a.m., distribution. Donation drop-off hours 8 a.m.-noon Mondays through Fridays. 627 Coon St. Rhinelander-areafoodpantry.org.

Dec. 28, Indoor Farmers Market: Saturdays from 9 a.m.-noon throughout the fall and winter at the YMCA of the Northwoods,

2003 E. Winnebago St., Rhinelander. 715-362-9622 x 118.

Dec. 30, AA and Al-Anon Meetings: 7 p.m., Immanuel Lutheran Church, 21 W. Timber Dr., Rhinelander. 715-362-5910.

Dec. 30, Overeaters Anonymous: 1 p.m., Trinity Lutheran Church, 235 N. Stevens St., Rhinelander. 715-362-4258.

Dec. 30, Bridge Games: noon, American Legion Hall, 121 W. Front St., Minocqua. \$4. Call Lee at 715-356-4243.

Dec. 30, Baby Storytime:

10 a.m., Rhinelander District Library. Stories, songs, and playtime. Free to the public. 715-365-1070 or rhinelanderlibrary.org.

Dec. 30, Rhinelander Area Food Pantry: 3-5 p.m., distribution. Donation drop-off hours 8 a.m.-noon Mondays through Fridays. 627 Coon St. Rhinelander-areafoodpantry.org.

Dec. 31, Preschool Storytime: 10 a.m., Rhinelander District Library. Stories, flannels, songs, and fun for ages two and older. Free to the public. 715-365-1070 or rhinelanderlibrary.org.



Find us online at StarJournalNOW.com



A library holiday tradition

Visitors to the Rhinelander District Library had the opportunity to vote for their favorite gingerbread houses, during the fourth annual contest. There were entries in three categories, pre-K to sixth grade, seventh through twelfth grades and adult and family. The Brothers Grimm are credited with making gingerbread houses popular by featuring them in the backdrop of their fairytale, "Hansel and Gretel." The tradition of decorated gingerbread houses is believed to have started in Germany in the early 1800s, following the publication of the story. Didn't enter the library's contest this year? Starting planning now for the 2025 edition of the tasty competition. **Star Journal photos**

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Christmas concerts

Last week, choir and band students from Rhinelander High School, James Williams Middle School, Northwoods Community Elementary School, and Crescent Elementary School performed in holiday concerts.

Bob Mainhardt photos



Railroad museum dazzles with light displays

The Rhinelander Railroad Museum celebrated the magic of the holiday season at its Christmas Open House earlier this month at Pioneer Park.

The event featured light displays and a decorated historic train depot.

Guests could explore the logging museum and discover intricate model train exhibits.

There were speeder rides and sleigh and wagon

rides by Dr. Allison's Bob and Bess Express, and the event was complete with a visit from Santa and festive treats like cookies and cocoa.

Proceeds benefited the Rhinelander Railroad Association.

Pioneer Park Historical Complex is located at 705 Martin Lynch Drive in Rhinelander.



The inside of the museum is just as festive as the outside and features model train exhibits.



Holiday hods and a little helper greet visitors at the Rhinelander Railroad Museum's Christmas Open House at Pioneer Park. Dave Melancon photos



The railroad museum lights up its trains and trees for the holidays.



This hodge is lit and ready for Christmas.

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Grading school districts

SDR looks at state, local assessments

BY EILEEN PERSIKE
EDITOR

RHINELANDER – School districts in Wisconsin have been receiving annual District Report Cards since 2012.

School District of Rhinelander Director of Instruction Ryan Ourada explained it to the school board Dec. 16, as one way to check the health and wellness of the district.

“The state report card is one component to show the great things the district is doing and the success they are having and all the efforts that are within that,” he said.

The accountability reports are mandated by state law and are designed to measure pupil achievement in math and English language arts, growth in math and English language arts, rates of attendance, and whether students are on track for graduation. Districts then are given from one star – fails to meet expectations, to five stars – significantly exceeds expectations.

School District of Rhinelander received an overall score of 63.1, three stars, or, “meets expectations.”

How the state arrives at the scores can be confusing. For example, scores can be weighted to reflect the economically disadvantaged student population in different ways. Achievement is the smallest portion of the report card.

“But,” said Ourada, “We’re showing great achievement as a district. That’s been growing since 2015-16; we’ve seen that growth with our achievement scores so that’s a really important thing for our district.”

Growth, on the other hand, is the largest part of SDR’s grade.

“When your achievement is high, your level of growth starts to shrink, so their growth may seem small but they are already achieving at those meeting and advanced areas,” Ourada added. “We’re continuing to grow and continuing to get closer to the state averages each year and showing great achievement which is a huge celebration for us.”

Superintendent Eric Burke agrees the State Report Card is confusing and says the district’s Local Report Card better represents what makes a school or district “great.” The local effort is being led by CESA 9 [Cooperative Educational Service Agency] and the school districts in CESA 9.



School board member Duane Frey asks a question of Ryan Ourada, School District of Rhinelander director of instruction, during Ourada’s presentation on State Report Cards Dec. 16. **Star Journal photo**

“We believe that the Local Report Card provides a much better picture for school districts to set measurable goals that are meaningful for every school, classroom and educator,” Burke said. “The local report card measures indicators such as state testing, college/career readiness, operational and financial stewardship, staff retention, staff satisfaction, student engagement, and parent and community satisfaction. Our school district sets our strategic plan, building goals, and classroom goals directly connected to the indicators in the local report card.”

Burke pointed out that results of ACT and Forward state tests taken in 2023-24 showed some of the best scores ever.

The ACT composite score taken by this year’s high school seniors was 19.3, the second-highest score in eight years. That same group scored highest or second highest in five years in math, reading/writing/English, and science.

In 2023-24, third through eighth graders taking the Forward exam scored a seven-year high, as did James Williams Middle Schoolers who took the Forward test in 2023-24.

Individually, all the elementary schools achieved at least four-year high scores, with Pelican achieving a seven-year high score.

“The State testing showed significant growth in achievement for all of our schools,” Burke said. “Kudos to all of our staff, students and families for their support of our mission of equity, empowerment and excellence for all in SDR.”

For more information on the State Report Cards and Local Report Cards, visit Rhinelander.k12.wi.us, and click on Strategic Plan.

ONEIDA COUNTY WARRANTS OF THE WEEK

The Oneida County Sheriff’s Office is asking for your assistance in locating these individuals.

If you have seen or have information regarding their whereabouts, please contact the Oneida County Sheriff’s Office at 715-361-5100.



Daniel W. Wilson, 69, Rhinelander. Fail to pay. BOND: \$1,006.50



Carlos D. Smith Jr., 48, Hayward. Fail to appear. BODY ONLY



Hannah J. Rausch, 25, Tomahawk. Fail to appear. BODY ONLY



Timothy W. Mann, 29, Lac du Flambeau. Fail to appear. BODY ONLY



Steven R. Gibbs, Jr., 53, Hazelhurst. Fail to pay. BOND: \$558

ONEIDA COUNTY COURT REPORT

DEC. 12-18, 2024

Scott R. Eades, 44, Rhinelander, two charges bail jumping-felony, \$5000 signature bond, AIA Jan. 6.

Craig A. Wells, 37, Rhinelander, OWI (2nd), \$1500 signature bond, AIA Jan. 22.

Robert G. Miller Jr., 42, Rhinelander, OWI (3rd), \$2500 signature bond, AIA Jan. 22.

Robert A. Rozum, 53, Rhinelander, disorderly conduct with domestic abuse-threat modifier, \$150 cash bond, AIA Jan. 22.

Michael R. Nelson, 50, Rhinelander, possession with intent-amphetamine/methamphetamine/etc. (>3-10g) with second and subsequent offense modifier, \$5000 signature bond, AIA Jan. 28.

Nicholas J. Johnson, 34, Woodruff, four charges bail jumping-felony, \$10,000 cash bond, AIA Dec. 30.

Christina H. Patterson, 56, Rhinelander, two charges bail jumping-felony with repeater modifiers, \$10000 cash bond, AIA Feb. 6.

Gerald E. Paugel Jr., 63, Rhinelander, OWI (4th), \$1000 cash bond, AIA Jan. 28.

Jordan T. Peters, 35, Oshkosh, two charges bail jumping-misdemeanor, disorderly conduct, dismissed on prosecutor’s motion, bail jumping-misdemeanor, charge dismissed but read in, battery, guilty due to no contest plea, 12 months POP.

Gerald R. Boehm, 51, Ogema, disorderly conduct/cause disturbance,

guilty due to no contest plea, \$20 restitution.

Kari A. Knauf, 45, Rhinelander, retail theft-intentionally take (<=\$500), guilty due to no contest plea, \$108.78 restitution and fine.

Matthew J. Johnson, 37, Rhinelander, bail jumping-misdemeanor, dismissed on prosecutor’s motion.

Claire M. Olsen, 27, Marinette, hit and run, bail jumping-felony, both charges administrative disposition.

Marsaide M. Rademaker, 29, Kaukauna, possession of THC, guilty due to guilty plea, \$100 fine.

Nicholas A. Marks, 42, Rhinelander, bail jumping-misdemeanor, battery with domestic abuse modifier, criminal damage to property with domestic abuse modifier, disorderly conduct with domestic abuse modifier, possession of cocaine/cocaine, disorderly conduct, all charges dismissed but read in, two charges bail jumping-misdemeanor, 4th degree sexual assault, all charges guilty due to no contest plea, 30 days jail.

Timothy A. White, 62, Rhinelander, possess firearm-convicted of a felony, guilty due to guilty plea, \$1158 fine.

Eugene P. Waldvogel Jr., 56, Minocqua, resisting or obstructing an officer, dismissed on prosecutor’s motion.

Maribeth V. Whitewing, 40, Wittenberg, bail jumping-felony, bail jumping-misdemeanor, both charges dismissed but read in, seven charges of issuing worthless checks

(<=\$2500), guilty due to guilty plea, 3 years POP, 9 months county jail imposed and stayed.

Matthew T. Rockwood, 32, Rhinelander, remove vehicle’s parts without consent, charge dismissed but read in, disorderly conduct with repeater and use of a dangerous weapon modifiers, guilty due to no contest plea, 1 year WHS/POP.

Alicia J. Thomas, 32, Minocqua, possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia both with PTAC as a party to a crime modifiers, both charges dismissed on prosecutor’s motion.

Richard J. Schreiber Jr., 31, Green Bay, disorderly conduct and battery, both charges dismissed on prosecutor’s motion.

ABBREVIATION KEY:

DPA - Deferred Prosecution Agreement
DEJ - Deferred Entry of Judgment
WSP - Wisconsin State Prison
ES - Extended Supervision
PAC - Prohibited Alcohol Concentration
IID - Ignition Interlock Device
DL - Driver’s license
AIA - Adjourned initial appearance
PTAC - Party to a crime
WHS/POP - Withhold sentence/period of probation
DRI - Dismissed but read in
PTC - Pre-trial conference
PH - Preliminary Hearing

Snowmobile safety course set for January

FOR STAR JOURNAL

A snowmobile safety course will be held Monday, Jan. 6, and Tuesday, Jan. 7, from 4-7 p.m., at the Oneida County Sheriff’s Office in Rhinelander.

Participants must attend both dates and be at least 12 years old to enroll.

Pre-registration is required, and space is limited. To register, complete the form on the community education classes section of the School District of Rhinelander’s website.

Before registering, students must obtain a Department of Natural Resources

(DNR) customer ID number by contacting the DNR at 1-888-936-7463.

The course costs \$10 per participant. Cash or check will be accepted; checks should be addressed to the Oneida County Sheriff’s Office.

The sheriff’s office is located at 2000 E. Winnebago St.

The DNR-certified course is sponsored by The Oneida County Sheriff’s Office and the School District of Rhinelander Community Education Program.

For more information, contact Mike Cheslock at 715-365-9745.

OCHD shares ice safety tips

FOR STAR JOURNAL

The Oneida County Health Department (OCHD) is offering residents some tips to stay safe on the ice this winter.

The county recommends checking ice thickness before venturing onto frozen bodies of water. Ice under four inches is thin and not safe to support any activity.

According to the OCHD, four inches is safe for walking, ice fishing, or skating; five to seven inches for snowmobiles or ATVs; seven to eight inches for side-by-side ATVs; nine to 12 inches for small cars; 13 to 17 inches for trucks; and 20-plus inches for heavy-duty trucks with wheelhouse shelters.

OCHD also provided the additional safety tips:

Check conditions locally. Ice thickness

can vary depending on the lake, river, or even different parts of the same body of water.

Carry safety gear. Bring ice picks, a whistle, and a rope for emergencies.

Avoid cracks, currents, and open water. Ice near flowing water or near springs is often thinner.

Buddy up. Never go out on the ice alone.

Know what to do if you fall in. Stay calm, keep your head above water, and use ice picks or your hands to pull yourself out.

For more information, visit the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’ ice safety page at dnr.wisconsin.gov/education/outdoorskills/icesafety.

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Dogs 7272

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Hodag Highlights

BOYS BASKETBALL

The Ashland Oredockers came to Rhinelander for a non-conference game against the Hodags. The Oredockers led early in the game 7-2. The Hodags then outscored the Oredockers 35-7 to take a 37-14 halftime lead. Rhinelander continually made plays in the second half and eventually put the game into run time with a 40-point lead with six minutes remaining and won 76-34. Truman Lamers led all scorers with 24 points, followed by Devon Feck with 17, and off the bench, Abe Gretzinger scored 11. The Hodags were undefeated at 5-0 and 2-0 in the conference.



Truman Lamers was fouled on a dunk attempt. Lamers scored a game-high 24 points.



Senior Hayden Schommer scored two points on the shot under the basket. Schommer scored four points in the game.



Senior reserve Dylan Hopsfensperger drove the lane and scored two of his four points in the game.



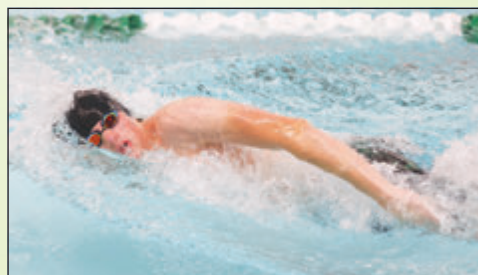
Jatyn Barkus got the assist on a pass to Devon Feck who scored two of his 17 on the play.

BOYS SWIM

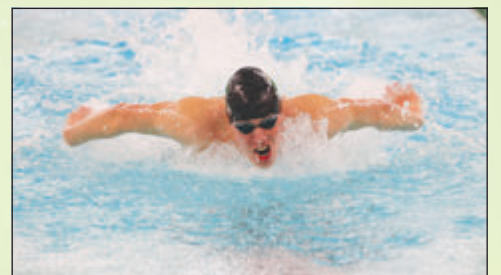
The Shawano/Seymour Thunder Hawks and the Hodags were both undefeated in the conference standings going into the meet on Tuesday, Dec. 17. Now the Hodags are the only undefeated team in the conference as they won 133-34. Rhinelander won all 11 events, with Shawn Denis and fellow senior Dolan O'Malley being four event winners. Denis won the 50 freestyle, O'Malley won the 200-yard individual medley, and both were on all three winning relays. Other individual winners were senior Mathias Fugle in the 200- and 100-yard freestyle. Charlie Antonuk won the 100 breaststroke, Judson O'Malley won the 100 butterfly and 100 backstroke, and Dean Gillingham won the 500 freestyle.



Michael Schiek swam the freestyle in the 200-yard medley relay for the Hodag B entry, and the foursome of Schiek, Chris Larson, Paul Denis, and Daniel Meier placed second to the Hodag A entry.



Mathias won the 200-yard freestyle and the 100-freestyle.



Dolan O'Malley is swimming the butterfly leg of the 200-yard individual medley. O'Malley won the event and was part of the winning relays.



Shawn Denis checks the scoreboard as he finishes the 50-yard freestyle in first place.



Senior Shawn Denis holds the lap marker for his brother Paul, a freshman in the 500-yard freestyle.



Charlie Antonuk won the 100-yard breaststroke.



Kadin Rodczak took a shot on goal in the first period.



Goalie Asher Rivord gets a stick on a shot on goal for a save.



Zach Edyvean takes a shot on goal that is saved by the Pacelli goalie.



Gabe Kennedy took a shot on goal that missed, but Dylan Shefvland was there for the rebound and put the puck in the net to tie the game 1-1.



Stevens Point Pacelli's first goal goes between the legs of Hodag goalie Asher Rivord for the Pacelli 1-0 lead.

BOYS HOCKEY

The Hodag hockey team was looking for a home win on Tuesday, Dec. 17, as they hosted Stevens Point Pacelli. Pacelli scored twice in the first period. Dylan Shefvland scored in the first and tied the game at one. Pacelli led 2-1 after one period of play. Timber Cronauer scored in the second period to tie the game. The Cardinals then scored with 4:33 gone by in the third. That 3-2 lead would hold up as the Hodags could not capitalize on chances in the third and could not score after pulling goalie Asher Rivord in the third with 1:43 remaining in the game. The Hodags were outshot 31-22 and are now 1-5 in the season and 0-2 in the conference.



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